

Message Text

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ACTION CU-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12
NEA-10 PA-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SY-05
MCT-01 INRE-00 /081 W
-----099581 291519Z /44

O R 291440Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3466

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 1848

USIA FOR IEU, IBS/PE - PLANINSKY

STATE FOR CU/EE, CU/IAP

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES, SOFIA

1. BRIEF CEREMONY ON AUGUST 28 CLOSED WORLD
UNIVERSITY GAMES (UNIVERSIADA '77) IN SOFIA,
IN CONTRAST TO PAGEANTRY THAT OPENED GAMES ON
AUGUST 17 WHICH INCLUDED SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCE
BY 1,300 BULGARIAN FOLK DANCERS AND SINGERS AT
VASIL LEVSKY NATIONAL STADIUM. UNIVERSIADA '77
WAS OPENED BY PRESIDENT TODOR ZHIVKOV AND CLOSED
BY FISU PRESIDENT DR. PRIMO NEBIOLO OF TURIN.
AT CLOSING NACHO PAPAZOV, CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE
FOR SCIENCE, TECHNICAL PROGRESS AND HIGHER
EDUCATION AND CHAIRMAN OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
FOR UNIVERSIADA '77 TOLD CAPACITY CROWD AT STADIUM
THAT "UNDER FLAME OF UNIVERSIADA GRACIOUS AND
NOBLE SPORTS STRUGGLE WAS HELD." WEATHER DURING
GAMES WAS FAVORABLE EXCEPT FOR TWO CHILLY AND
RAINY DAYS WHEN, IRONICALLY, SWIMMERS AND DIVERS
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IN OUTDOOR POOLS COMPETED. AMERICAN TEAM CAME
TO SOFIA AND RETURNED HOME ON A SPECIAL PANAM
CHARTER FLIGHT. BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES PROVIDED
STRONG SECURITY AND NO MAJOR INCIDENTS OCCURRED.

2. OVER THE YEARS, WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES
HAVE BEEN INCREASING IN PRESTIGE, PARTICIPANTS,

AND MEDIA ATTENTION, WITH UNIVERSIADA '77
TOPPING ALL. OVER 4,600 ATHLETES FROM 89 COUNTRIES
PARTICIPATED. LARGEST TEAMS WERE FROM SOVIET
UNION AND BULGARIA, WITH OVER 300 PARTICIPANTS,
FOLLOWED BY US WITH 267, CUBA (240), FRANCE (215)
AND ITALY (194). PRESS CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED
AT PARK HOTEL MOSKVA TO ACCOMMODATE 321 ACCREDITED
MEDIA PERSONNEL FROM 30 COUNTRIES, MOSTLY EUROPEAN.
DAILY TV COVERAGE BY INTERVISION AND EUROVISION
WAS SUBSTANTIAL, REACHING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF
VIEWERS WHO SAW TWO WORLD AND MANY UNIVERSITY
GAMES RECORDS BROKEN.

3. AS EXPECTED SOVIET UNION, WHICH PREPARED
FOR GAMES WITH ITS BEST UNIVERSITY ATHLETES LONG
IN ADVANCE, LED ALL TEAMS IN MEDALS, WINNING 96
OF 339 AWARDED. US WAS SECOND WITH 43, FOLLOWED
BY BULGARIA AND RUMANIA, WITH IMPRESSIVE TOTALS
OF 37 AND 35 RESPECTIVELY. EAST GERMANY, WHICH
SCORED SO HIGHLY AT LAST YEAR'S MONTREAL OLYMPICS,
WON ONLY 6, NONE GOLD.

4. BASKETBALL ATTRACTED INTENSE INTEREST AND
TICKETS FOR RELATIVELY SMALL UNIVERSIADA HALL
WERE AT A PREMIUM. EVERYONE EXPECTED US TO WIN
THE GOLD AND THE YOUNG AMERICAN PLAYERS DID NOT
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DISAPPOINT AS THEY WENT THROUGH GRUELING SCHEDULE
UNDEFEATED, BEATING THE SOVIET TEAM TWICE, FIRST
129-95 AND, IN AUGUST 27 FINAL, 87-68. US WOMEN'S
TEAM, WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE SOME OF AMERICA'S BEST,
WON THE SILVER, UPSETTING A STRONG BULGARIAN WOMEN'S
TEAM (WHICH WON THE BRONZE) IN THE SEMI-FINAL,
87-84. THE AMERICAN WOMEN LOST TO TALLER, WELL-
DRILLED SOVIET TEAM, 107-90 FOR THE GOLD. TOP
SCORER IN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL AT GAMES WAS AMERICAN
CAROL BLAZEJOWSKI, FROM MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE,
NEW JERSEY.

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MCT-01 INRE-00 /081 W

-----099536 291521Z /44

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5. PEOPLE EXPECTED US SWIMMING TEAMS, PERENNIALY STRONG, TO WIN MANY MEDALS. HOWEVER, US COACHES ADMITTED THESE WERE UNFORTUNATELY NOT THE BEST AMERICAN TEAMS, HAVING BEEN ORGANIZED VIRTUALLY ON EVE OF GAMES. STILL, THEY WON THE MOST MEDALS WHICH INCLUDED A TRIPLE GOLD BY BONNIE GLASGOW, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, WHO CELEBRATED HER 18TH BIRTHDAY AUGUST 27 BY WINNING 200 METERS MEDLEY. "IT'S BEST BIRTHDAY I EVER HAD," SHE SAID.

6. IN ADDITION TO COMPETITION IN SPORTS EVENTS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE SCHEDULED NUMEROUS CULTURAL PROGRAMS DURING GAMES, AND THERE WERE VARIOUS MEETINGS AND RECEPTIONS. LATTER INCLUDED AUGUST 24 RECEPTION AT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, HOSTED BY RECENTLY-ARRIVED CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AND MRS. CHARLES MAGEE AND PRESIDENT OF US COLLEGIATE SPORTS COUNCIL, MR. AL BUCKINGHAM, FROM MORNINGSIDE COLLEGE, SIOUX CITY, IOWA. GUESTS INCLUDED BULGARIANS FROM EXECUTIVE BUREAU OF UNIVERSIADA '77, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, PERSONALITIES FROM RADIO, TELEVISION, NEWSPAPERS, AND MAGAZINES, AS WELL AS THOSE FROM FISU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND US TEAM.

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7. THUS, WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES HAVE CONCLUDED IN SOFIA. AT CLOSING CEREMONIES VASIL LEVSKY STADIUM SCOREBOARD FLASHED "DOVIZHDANE DO MEXICO" ("TIL WE MEET IN MEXICO) AND CHAIRMAN PAPAZOV GREETED HOSTS OF FORTHCOMING WINTER GAMES (CZECHOSLOVAKIA) AND 1979 WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES (MEXICO) WISHING THEM "NEW AND BETTER SUCCESSES."
MAGEE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ATHLETIC PRESENTATIONS
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Line Count: 168
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9cf05751-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1448052
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES, SOFIA
TAGS: SCUL, BU
To: USIA STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9cf05751-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009